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Robert L. Peterson accepts University of Montana Hill professorship

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PETERSON ACCEPTS UM
HILL PROFESSORSHIP

Dr. Robert L. Peterson, presently a member of the history faculty at the University of Oregon, is the newly named University of Montana Hill Professor of Business History, according to Dr. Melvin C. Wren, chairman of the UM history department.

The professorship was effectuated by a \$72,000, three-year grant from the Hill Foundation of St. Paul, Minn., to the UM Foundation. Prof. Wren said the Hill Foundation was established by Louis W. Hill. He was the son of the famed "Empire Builder" James J. Hill, who is credited with the building of the Great Northern Railroad.

Dr. Peterson will join forces with Dr. K. Ross Toole, UM Hammond Professor of Western History, who has been collecting historical records in Montana and the mountain west for the past year.

Dr. Peterson's duties will be three-fold: He will conduct a three-quarter graduate seminar in business history; he will establish a program of research in northwest business history;

And his third responsibility will be to build a library of business history publications to microfilm records of the business enterprises in the area and to travel intensively and extensively in the Northwest for the purpose of interviewing business leaders on aspects of business interest and to encourage the deposit of business records in the University Library for present and

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5-19-66

future use by graduate students of business history.

The Hill Foundation grant will pay Dr. Peterson's salary and the costs of his travel, and the processing and safe keeping of the historical records he acquires for the University.

Prof. Wren said Dr. Peterson's qualifications were particularly well suited to his duties. Dr. Peterson earned his Ph.D. degree in business history from the University of Texas.

He did post-doctoral studies in his field at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. With this program the University of Montana becomes one of a very few universities in the nation which offer a doctorate in business history.

Dr. Peterson has authored several articles in professional history and business journals and one of them, a study of "New England Financial Institutions" published in the BUSINESS HISTORY QUARTERLY, is of particular note.

He also has written two books, both of which will be published in 1967. One is a study of the John Hancock Life Insurance Company and the other is a study of railroad regulation in Texas.

Dr. Peterson and the Hill Foundation grant will more fully develop the new UM doctoral program in business history, Prof. Wren said. Curriculum is constantly being adjusted to meet modern needs, and this development is especially important in doctoral programs.

But he said, "the primary goal of the program will be the much greater knowledge of Northwest history, and particularly of Montana, than is possible without research into the business history of the area.

"The satisfaction to be gained from an intimate and sound knowledge of regional history, from the interest of citizens in their own past, and from the stimulation of regional pride, should bring rich reward to the participants in the program and to those thousands whom the program will touch and who will contribute their personal and business records to the historical collection.

"No region in the United States has done so little in analyzing and writing its history as has the Northwest. The region has lagged far behind the South, the Atlantic seaboard, the Midwest, the Southwest and the West Coast in the study of its own past." This program will help alleviate that problem, Prof. Wren said.